

VILLAGE BOARD OPERATIONS MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 29, 2018
VILLAGE HALL
5:30 P.M.

PRESENT: Mayor Hubbard, Trustees Dove, Eriksen, Sennett, and Stokes-Cawley, Village Atty. Pavlus

SMTC Sidewalk Survey – Trustee Sennett explained that she and Trustee Stokes-Cawley looked at the goal to provide a safe way for children to walk to school from any village home. Trustee Sennett said she will review the high points of the Syracuse Metropolitan Transportation Council's (SMTC) new sidewalk prioritization assessment document, after which Trustee Stokes-Cawley will review her research of the City of Ithaca's sidewalk policy and legislation. The City of Ithaca looks at it as a community resource. Trustee Sennett said the SMTC survey is a planning level assessment only. On the overhead screen she explained the number of different maps included in the report, as follows:

Figure #1 – Study Area: an overview of where there are and where there are not sidewalks

Figure #2 – Road Ownership – areas where the Village would have to work with another entity

Figure #3 – Traffic Volume – Trustee Sennett said she found this interesting and there are some surprises, such as more than 1,000 cars per day on E. & W. Elizabeth Street.

Figure #4 – Accidents – data from the most recent ten-year period (2008-2017) with a few bike accidents

Figure #5 – Recommendations – the SMTC rated streets on how difficult it would be to install sidewalks based on impediments to sidewalk installations; areas also broken into segments.

Trustee Sennett said SMTC looked at roadside topography, utility poles, landscaping, buildings and other structures and provided pictures of each of the physical features as examples. For instance, relative to trees/landscaping, a picture of areas with no issues (Highland Street), some issues (Wicklow Drive in the Whitegate development), and significant issues (Fennell Street). Trustee Sennett said also included in the report is a multi-page chart of each segment. Asking how we could get this done and noting that we don't have a policy / legislation for new sidewalks, Trustee Sennett turned the presentation over to Trustee Stokes-Cawley who said everyone contributes to the City of Ithaca's sidewalk program. The City of Ithaca looked at their sidewalk policy history and decided on their objectives: • Make sidewalk costs fair and predictable for property owners • Better, faster sidewalk repair and • Treat sidewalks as shared resource & build more sidewalks. Trustee Stokes-Cawley said they accomplished their objectives by • creating sidewalk districts – the City is divided into five sidewalk improvement districts • Each lot being subject to an annual assessment (assessment formula evens cost out) and • by crediting for past work. Trustee Stokes-Cawley welcomed discussion to consider steps to complete our sidewalk network.

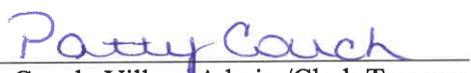
Trustee Sennett said she likes the idea of fairness. She talked about the request by a Teasel Lane resident for sidewalks between Teasel and E. Lake Street that Onondaga Street property owners would have to pay for, not the Teasel Lane resident. Trustee Sennett said we don't have a fair system – she walks all over the Village but doesn't pay for sidewalks as Goodspeed Place doesn't have them. People on W. Elizabeth Street want sidewalks, but there are two holdouts – we are letting the minority make the decision. She said we should strive for a change of mind to sidewalks being a community resource – an investment in the community. There are lots of things to figure out. The Village would become a sidewalk district and funds could be used for new sidewalks and repairs of existing sidewalks. Trustee Eriksen asked if it has been a money issue with the holdouts. No one could answer for sure, but Mayor Hubbard surmised that it is not just the money. He said some people just get comfortable with not having a sidewalk. Trustee Sennett asked how we assess – is the commercial district assessed differently?. Mayor Hubbard said the commercial district is charged the same unit price for concrete sidewalks as are residential property owners. Trustee Sennett said this all food for thought and the SMTC report includes next steps, i.e. make complete connections first, do easiest first, etc. The Village Board needs to decide if we want to change our sidewalk

policy. Mayor Hubbard said he doesn't know how to answer the person who doesn't want sidewalks. Trustee Eriksen said he doesn't really know how to answer that either, but perhaps the answer should be, "So that every kid can walk to school". This is about other people. In response to Mayor Hubbard, Atty. Pavlus said municipalities are allowed to pass legislation. It would be a change to the Village's current policy for sidewalk replacement – it would take a change in policy by the Village Board. In response to Trustee Dove, Atty. Pavlus said easements are not required if the sidewalks are within the right-of-way. He said it would be appropriate for the Planning Board to take this up if the Village Board wants to explore the idea more. With the Study Area map back on the overhead screen, Mayor Hubbard recognized that we'd need to say where the sidewalks need to be so as to define the scope - put a circle around something. Mayor Hubbard said he likes what Atty. Pavlus said about the Planning Board – get it out of the political arena. Atty. Pavlus said we had a public hearing on the 50/50 split of sidewalk repair cost and we would have to have a public hearing for a Local Law. Trustee Eriksen noted that an adjustment would need to be made for property owners who recently paid for sidewalk repair. Trustee Sennett concurred adding that there is a lot that has to be done. Mayor Hubbard said a district is intriguing because single-source no votes shouldn't stop something for the betterment of the community. Trustee Stokes-Cawley reiterated that the funds would be to build new sidewalks and make repairs. Trustee Eriksen added, with credit for money just spent. Trustee Sennett said there is also the matter of the property owners who want to keep their slate sidewalks. She said she thinks of the Village Board as stewards of safety. Mayor Hubbard said he is comfortable with the Planning Board looking at it. Their meetings are public so the entire Village Board could attend. He restated that he likes the element to keep it out of politics. In talking about keeping a deliberate fund and including the charge on everyone's tax bill, the question of the tax cap came up. Mayor Hubbard said we may have to go over the tax cap the first year. Trustee Stokes-Cawley advised that the City of Ithaca's sidewalk policy is on-line for anyone who wants to look at it. Clerk/Treasurer Couch said this was a very good presentation. Trustee Sennett said perhaps the Planning Board could do their own Operations Meeting at which this could be presented again. Trustee Eriksen said he will call Special Council Galbato to find out if we can get on the next agenda.

Skaneateles Community Center Parking Lot – Regarding the email from Ice Rink & Facilities Director Matt Major asking if it is possible to have the Village slurry seal the Skaneateles Community Center (SCC) parking lot this year, Mayor Hubbard said for now it is the Village's responsibility to maintain it. Atty. Pavlus said it will be good to find out when the lot will have to be repaved as that will be their responsibility as opposed to maintenance that is the Village's. Trustee Dove said if the Village wants out in the future, we should give ample notice.

Village Hall Park – Trustee Eriksen said he was approached by the school asking if the park in front of Village Hall could be used for an art exhibit. The Board concurred that they'd like to see use of the area for community events. Clerk/Treasurer Couch said perhaps something could happen there during Dicken's especially since we have a lovely lit tree and tasteful holiday decorations on Village Hall. Trustee Dove said she can mention that to the new Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Hilary Fenner.

Adjournment – The Operations Meeting adjourned at 6:27 PM.


Patty Couch, Village Admin./Clerk-Treasurer